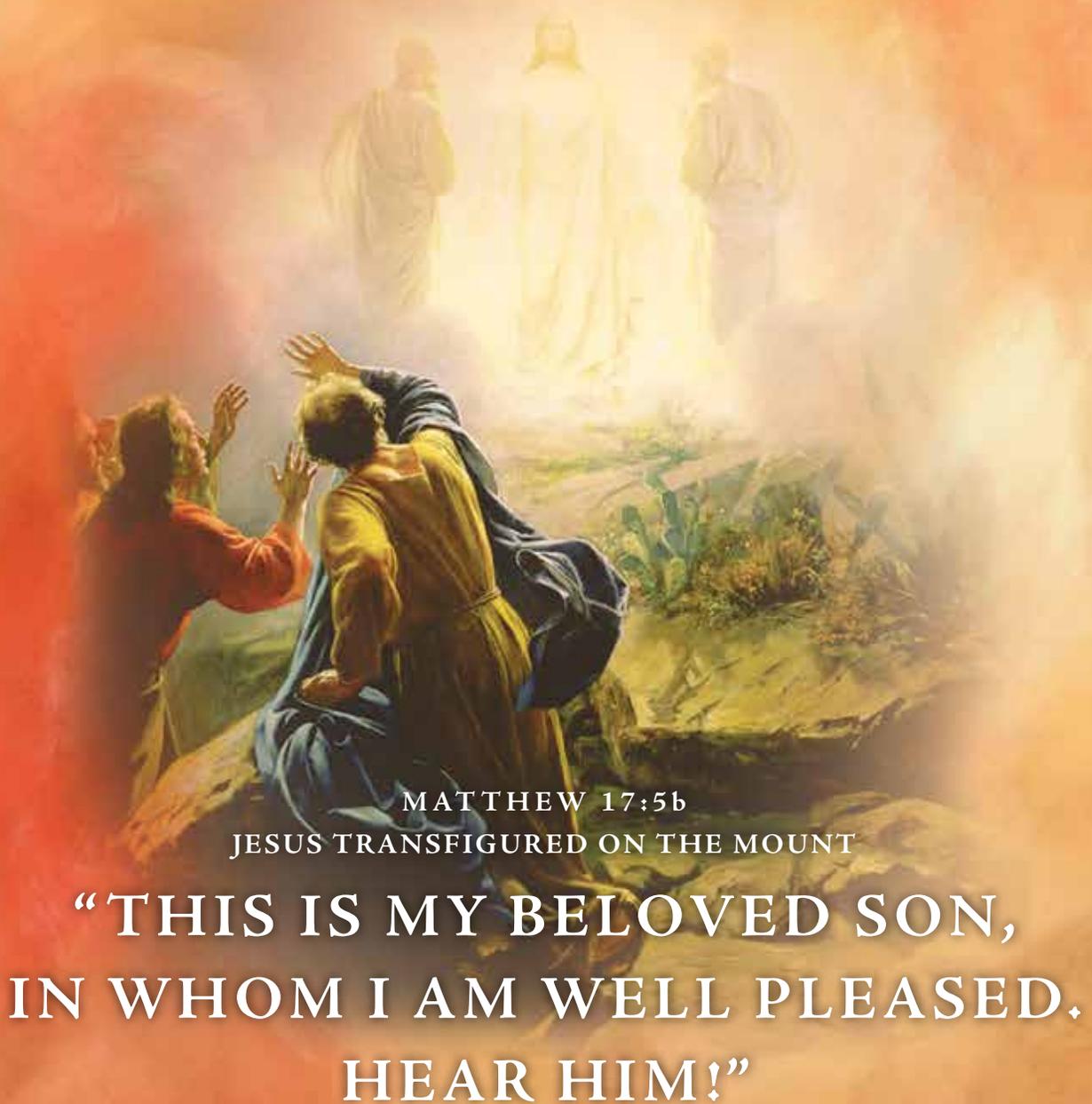


LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

"...The Scripture Cannot Be Broken." (John 10:35)



MATTHEW 17:5b

JESUS TRANSFIGURED ON THE MOUNT

**“THIS IS MY BELOVED SON,
IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED.
HEAR HIM!”**



The Transfiguration:

The last painting by the Italian High Renaissance master Raphael. Commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de Medici (the later Pope Clement VII [1523-1534]) and conceived as an altarpiece for the Narbonne Cathedral in France, Raphael worked on it until his death in 1520.



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The Transfiguration of Jesus Is Your Glory!

He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light” (Matthew 17:2).

Suddenly Jesus was dazzling — His face, His clothes! Then, He was speaking with Moses and Elijah, prophets of long ago! Astounding! Why was this happening?

I. Was it for Jesus’ benefit? Yes. Did not angels minister to Him after Satan tempted Him? Did not an angel strengthen Him in the Garden of Gethsemane while He earnestly prayed to His Father? Surely it was for Jesus’ benefit that Moses and Elijah came to speak with Him about His “decease,” His departure, His end. Moses and Elijah had labored among God’s people many years earlier to point them to God’s merciful and gracious atonement through the Messiah to come. Salvation through Christ was their “work.”

II. Was the transfiguration of Jesus for the benefit of the disciples (Peter, James, and John) who were with Him? Yes. They had heard Jesus speak wonderful words of forgiveness and compassion. They had seen Him work miracles of love and of might. They had heard Him soundly refute the Pharisees. Jesus was their Messiah, the “Christ,” the “Anointed One!”

Yet from Jesus’ own lips they heard words of His coming betrayal, torment, and death—words that filled them with fear and grief. Jesus had even sternly rebuked Peter for suggesting that such should never happen! The concept that the Messiah would be “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5), that He would win by surrendering, only to rise again in victory, the disciples did not understand. They felt defeat when they heard such words.

What a sight for sore eyes! God gave them a view of Jesus’ splendor and glory! God even gave His own stamp of approval: “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” Christ’s kingdom was a glory of atonement through His blood. His kingdom would not consist of visible things—shrines, buildings, and such things—as Peter helplessly suggested. Entry into His kingdom was a matter of trusting in His payment for sin, not in oneself. Peter, James, and John would need encouragement for the weeks ahead and for their labors in Christ in the years to come.

III. Was the transfiguration for you? Yes!

Do you need encouragement—at work, at school, with the children, with health, in getting along with others, in striving against Satan and against the weaknesses of your own flesh? Do you need assurance of God’s forgiveness for battles foolishly lost against sin? Does it seem that everything in society grows except the kingdom of Christ? That your life lacks the fun and the glamour of the crowds? That values are being swept from the next generation? That life is empty because someone you cherish has died? Do you feel defeated?

Then remember the transfigured Christ! Jesus, Who appeared “defeated” on the cross, is your glorious, resurrected Savior, living and ruling in splendor. In Him you are forgiven. Foes shall not defeat you. He will lead you safely through every challenge and chore in this life, taking you to the glorious life to come!

The Transfiguration is for you!

“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32).

“I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25-26).

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior” (Isaiah 43:1-3).

“Son, be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven you” (Matthew 9:2).



Richard Kanzenbach is pastor of Morning Star Lutheran Church in Fairchild, Wisconsin, and Peace with God Ev. Lutheran Church in Onalaska, Wisconsin.

BREATH OF GOD

In a certain sense, we have all been inspired at one time or another. A moving poem, the birth of a child, a once-in-a-lifetime beautiful sunset, or a heartfelt sermon could all serve to inspire us. This is generally the world's view of inspiration. Inspiration is viewed as merely a strong feeling or emotional tug, an intellectual movement to action—whether through song, painting, writing, or activism. This is why it is so essential that we remember to define the doctrine of verbal inspiration as being of *divine* origin rather than being a product of the emotions or minds of men. Our Bible is the verbally-inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God. Unfortunately, many—even “Christian” denominations—are denying these aspects of Scripture.

The term *Bible*, or *the books* (stemming from the Greek *ta biblia*), was not used extensively among Christians until 350 to 400 years after Christ's ascension into heaven. The Bible simply calls itself the *Scriptures* (Writings), *Writ*, or *Holy Scriptures* (Sacred Writings).

The Bible was written during approximately 1600 years by about forty different writers. Moses, who lived some 2500 years after the creation of the world, is, we believe, the first man commanded by God to write down His Word. “*The Lord said to Moses, ‘Write this for a memorial in the book’*” (Exodus 17:14). We don't find in the Scriptures any reference to anyone writing down God's words in the pre- or immediate post-flood world. We do know that God chose to speak directly to men during this early time period before He inspired the writing of the Scriptures. For instance, God spoke directly to Adam, Cain, Noah, Abraham, and others. We may also surmise that due to the great age to which the pre-flood patriarchs lived, oral transmission of God's revelation to man was the norm, and thus the written word was unnecessary at that time.

From Moses' time (about 1500 years before Christ) to about 100 years after Christ's ascension, God chose various men to be His instruments for setting down in writing the very thoughts and words He wished to communicate to mankind. As mentioned earlier, belief in divine verbal inspiration is becoming a rarity in our time,

If God truly gave us His Word in written form, as He has in the Bible, then what do we have with which to compare it?

yet we declare it to be an article of faith, to be believed on the Bible's own testimony. Is it credible that we go to the Bible to prove the origin, efficacy, and trustworthiness of the Bible? Why not? We claim that the Bible is unique due to its divine origin and unimaginable power, unlike anything else in all creation. If God truly gave us His Word in written form, as He has in the Bible, then what do we have with which to compare it? It simply must be able to stand on its own merit if it is the infallible Word of our Lord, as we claim and believe it to be.

Many may contend the Bible merely *contains* God's Word, or that God may have only guided the thoughts of the writers; but the Scriptures clearly teach a deeper form of inspiration than this. Our go-to passage for declaring the divine inspiration of Scripture would have to be 2 Timothy 3:16, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .*” as well as Peter's declaration, “*No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*” (2 Peter 1:20-21). We also have, in 1 Corinthians 2:13, the apostle Paul pointing to the source of divine inspiration: “*These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches.*” In his first epistle to the Thessalonians (2:13), Paul again cites the divine origin of the Bible: “*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*” The very words that Paul, the prophets, and the other apostles wrote and spoke were

Continued on page 11

“God Is Able — He Always Lives!”

“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

There is a commercial that has made the rounds over the last months on both local TV and radio. It begins with a computer voice answering a phone call, and continues with the caller giving the reason for his call, which is usually a request for some kind of help. The computer then “talks” to another computer, wondering what to do, because it is completely unable to give the required help. The caller is then forwarded “for an answer” to a pay phone somewhere that no one ever answers, or he is left with the dial-up modem noise. The commercial is then resolved by the sponsor touting itself as the place to which you can successfully go to get actual help.

The ad resonates with us because it presents a situation that is commonplace. Whether it is in the business world or from friend to friend, human beings are very limited when it comes to “being there” for one another. We may have our own plates full, and—while we have the best of intentions to listen to our friends’ needs—our attention is divided. Even when we are able to give our undivided attention, our ability to actually help may also be severely restricted—perhaps by our age, our location, or our finances.

We get so accustomed to this being “the way it is” that we might forget that this is not the case when we come in prayer to our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. There is nothing that the Lord our God can’t do! Whether it is the question of the virgin Mary wondering how it can be that she can give birth to a Son (Luke 1:34), or the disciples wondering how it is possible for anyone to be saved (Mark 10:26), the answer is the same: *“The things which are impossible with men are possible with God”* (Luke 18:27).

So it is that the Apostle Peter urges us to “. . . [cast] all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). We can “. . . commit [our] way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:5).

We know that those things which are earthly in nature

*“O all-embracing Mercy,
O ever-open Door,
What should we do without Thee
When heart and eye run o’er?
When all things seem against us,
To drive us to despair,
We know one gate is open,
One ear will hear our prayer.”*

TLH 279:4

will be taken care of in His good time and according to His good and gracious will. Those things about which we pray that are spiritual and eternal in nature are ours without qualification, although not necessarily immediately so. As the writer to the Hebrews reminds us, the One who takes those requests to His Father “always lives”—He is “able to save [us] to the uttermost” (Hebrews 7:25).

No limits! Do you have a sin for which you find yourself needing forgiveness on a regular basis? Has your guilty conscience been plaguing you? Jesus is there to make intercession for you—always! There are no office hours during which you have to call. You never have to worry about God being on vacation or asleep or so busy that He cannot get back to you (see Elijah mocking the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:27).

So, with God being able to save to the uttermost, and with Jesus always living to make intercession for us, let’s do as the Apostle Paul encourages in 1 Thessalonians 5:17: *“Pray without ceasing!”*



Paul Krause is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Markesan, Wisconsin.

A Roller Coaster in the Wilderness

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (Hebrews 3:7-15).

The title of this series, "Studies in the New Testament," implies that our goal is to carefully consider the New Testament Scripture, seeking to learn from it. This should always be our conscientious goal when reading any part of the Bible, especially those portions that are very familiar to us. The more familiar the Scripture, the more we are tempted to simply read or gloss over the words without carefully considering them.

In every case, whether the Scripture is familiar or new, it's important that we keep in mind that we have an inborn learning impediment: a corrupt sinful nature.

If we follow the lead of our corrupt hearts, we may be tempted to hold the Scripture "at arm's length" and look at it merely as historical information. This happens when we consider the events related in Scripture without really asking, "What am I to learn from this?" We are to remember that these things have been written for our learning (cf. Romans 15:4, 1 Corinthians 10:1-11).

It is for this very reason that we begin with prayer and ask that the Holy Spirit overcome our learning problem and guide us that we may learn and grow in faith.

In the book of Exodus, we read of the wanderings of the people of Israel. The Spirit of God, through His divinely-inspired record, allows us to look in on the mistakes of the descendants of Jacob/Israel. There are times when we may be tempted to look down on them (rather hypocritically), imagining that had *we* been trudging

...the same potential for disaster that faced the Israelites in the wilderness also faces us today.

through the sand alongside them, *we* would not have made the same mistakes. We may go so far as to snicker at the mistakes and sins of the Israelites.

Well, that's where these words from the Letter to the Hebrews issue us a warning.

In the wilderness, the lives of the Israelites were a roller coaster of sin and grace. In our own lives we find the same.

The Spirit of God speaks to us here not just to provide us with historical information, but more importantly because the same potential for disaster that faced the Israelites in the wilderness also faces us today. We, like the Israelites, may be caught in sin. We, like the Israelites, may be tempted to dabble, to continue in sin. We, like some of the Israelites, could be led to turn away from our gracious God. In order that we may not think ourselves immune, our gracious God warns each of us.

Therefore, let us be warned about trifling with the grace of God and trying God's patience. We do so when we adopt this kind of thinking (prevalent in our world today): "I can sin today and get forgiveness tomorrow." This is most certainly a trap of Satan.

We are sinners, but should we therefore spend each day trembling in fear that God will come? Certainly not, for we, though corrupt sinners, have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son. We have a merciful God Who sent His Son to die for us and who earnestly desires that every human being be saved by grace through faith in Christ.

We should be warned about trifling with the grace of God. Yet, when we tremble on our way, let us return again to the Gospel of Christ. It is there that we are reminded of the height and depth of God's love. It's there that the Spirit strengthens faith in what Christ has done, and lifts our hearts to hope and joy.



Andrew Schaller is pastor of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church in Watertown, South Dakota and Zion Ev. Lutheran Church in Hidewood Township, South Dakota.

Jonathan and David— What a Friendship!

Down through the centuries, the human relation of friendship has been greatly valued and cherished. Many are the quotes from the secular and religious world that sing the praises of it. In his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis writes the following about how highly those of old regarded friendship: “To the Ancients Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves, the crown of life and the school of virtue.” Helen Keller, a renowned person who was born blind, said concerning her experiences with friendship, “Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking in the light.” And then there is the saying employed when pointing to examples of the epitome of friendship: “They are like David and Jonathan.”

The Spirit of God recounts for us in Holy Scripture the exemplary friendship between these two Old Testament believers. Starting out in I Samuel 18, the inspired writer describes how very close the bond of friendship between Jonathan and David was with the words, “. . . *the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul*” (v.1).

That this close friendship was to be a lasting one is clear. The two made a covenant in which they took a solemn oath to have a never-ending friendship. As a sign and pledge of his intended faithfulness to this friendship covenant, Jonathan (the son of King Saul) gave David (a faithful servant of the kingdom) his royal robe, shield, sword, bow, and belt (vv. 3-4).

Jonathan’s friendship with David was put to the test in a number of very difficult and trying situations that involved his family ties. The modern proverb, “blood is thicker than water,” suggests that the family bond is greater than friendship; but Jonathan showed that his friendship with David transcended the family tie. In this he bore out Solomon’s divinely wise saying about friendship, “*There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother*” (Proverbs 18:24).

When King Saul became unjustifiably jealous of and hateful toward David, as well as fearful that David would soon ascend the throne in Israel, he made it known by both word and deed that he wanted David killed. Because of this, the bond of friendship put Jonathan in an uncomfortable position between his kingly father and

his friend. In response to the royal decree that Jonathan and the king’s servants were to hunt down David and kill him, Jonathan, moved by love for his friend, warned David of the impending danger. He then interceded on behalf of his friend before the king, pleading the case of an innocent and faithful servant who did nothing but good for the king and for Israel (1 Samuel 19:1-5). The world would say of this, “A friend in need is a friend indeed.”

As it became increasingly clear to Jonathan that David was the Lord’s anointed who was to succeed Saul on the throne and not himself, Jonathan showed an unselfish love for David and a humble, submissive spirit to the will of God. This demonstrates that true friendship involves putting a friend and his welfare before oneself. When Saul made it clear to his son that succession to the throne was at stake, in the spirit of loving friendship Jonathan was willing to incur the wrath of his father. He even put his life in jeopardy for the sake of David when Saul, in his fury, threw a spear at Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:30-33).

True friendship is, of course, a two-way street. With Jonathan acknowledging that David was to be the next king of Israel, David made a covenant with his friend that he would not follow the common practice of killing the king’s son or his family (1 Samuel 20:14-17). On this occasion, David showed true humility, as well as love for and devotion to Jonathan, by falling on his face to the ground and bowing down three times before him. And since this was one of the last times that they would see each other, the Bible records that “. . . *they kissed one another; and they wept together, but David more so*” (1 Samuel 20:41b).

Jonathan and David’s great love, devotion, and commitment to each other was indeed the epitome of friendship. And where is it that the two found the source of love to have such a friendship? It was to be found in their knowledge of and faith in God’s great redeeming love for them. The promised Christ, who would come many centuries later as their Savior, said, “*This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends*” (John 15:12-13).



Mark Gullerud is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bowdle, South Dakota, and Zion Lutheran Church in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Is it God-Pleasing To Visit a Church of Another Denomination?

In answering this question, we do well to start with what we mean by a church "of another denomination."

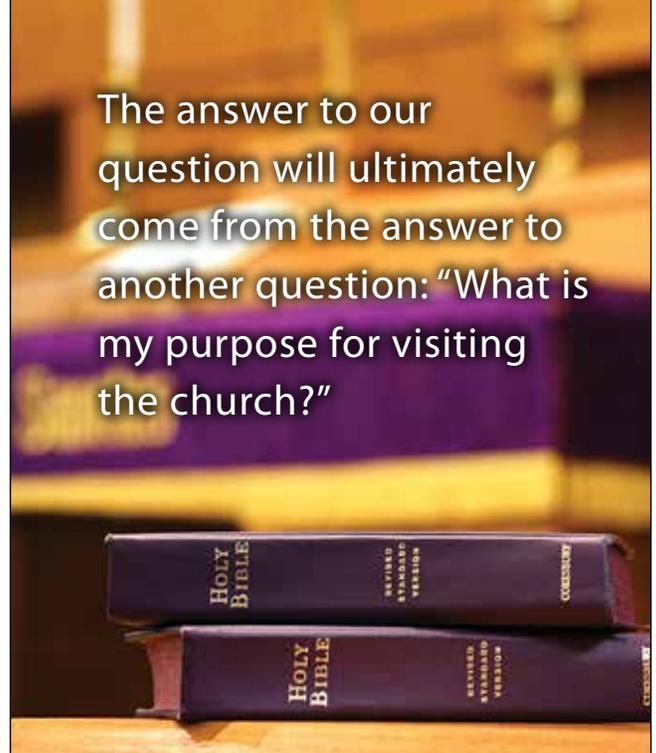
First of all, we are speaking of another *Christian* church—a church in which Christ and His Word are proclaimed. Visiting a non-Christian church involves a different set of considerations that will not be addressed here.

Secondly, it is valuable to recognize what the implications are when a church is identified as being of "another denomination." Essentially, we are understanding this to mean a church with which we are not in religious fellowship. Lutheran churches outside of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (ELCA, LC-MS, WELS, ELS, and so on) are still within our denomination—that is, Lutheran; but because we are not in established religious fellowship with them, the same principles apply to them as apply to churches outside of our denomination such as Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and others.

Some Christian churches stray so much from Scriptural truth that we would find very little in common with them. With other churches, we may have very much in common. However, if we do not share a clear and expressed unity of faith and confession, then to engage together in an outward expression of fellowship is not consistent with God's will. God desires confessional unity among those who express religious fellowship through worship, joint church work, prayer, and Christian education (compare 1 Corinthians 1:10, Amos 3:3, and Psalm 133:1).

Certainly, simply being at a church of a different denomination does not need to create concern for the confessional Christian. A variety of community events—blood drives, elections, and informational meetings—take place at church facilities. The answer to our question will ultimately come from the answer to another question: "What is my purpose for visiting the church?"

The answer to our question will ultimately come from the answer to another question: "What is my purpose for visiting the church?"



One such purpose may be to attend a wedding, funeral, or other significant event to which we have been invited by family or friends. Another reason to visit may be to observe what the church teaches. The purpose of this type of visit is not to worship or to be taught God's Word. A confessional Christian is able to attend these events without actively participating in the worship, and can do so without compromising God's will.

It is a testimony to the power of God's Word that even in such circumstances, if the true Gospel is proclaimed, there can still be comfort and benefit to those who hear. This is true regardless of who is proclaiming it. The Apostle Paul wrote, ". . . in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice" (Philippians 1:18).

If the purpose of visiting another church is instead to actively worship, to learn from Scriptures in a Bible Study, to pray, to engage in the work of the Gospel, to support that ministry, or any other practice of religious fellowship, then it is time to rethink the visit. In these circumstances, God's desire for unity among those who make such expression of religious fellowship and His direction to remain separate from false teaching would apply.

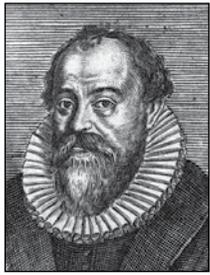
If you have further questions on this topic, or to discuss these matters more fully, please talk to your pastor. He's called as your spiritual shepherd and will be happy to

study and apply Scripture with you in these matters.



Wayne Eichstadt is associate pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota.

Johann Gerhard



Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) was born into a well-to-do family of the minor nobility of the central German city of Quedlinburg. He seems to have been a pious child with a sensitive conscience. Much as with Luther, God prodded Gerhard into his theological vocation by afflicting

him with serious illnesses when he was fifteen. He promised, if God spared his life, to enter the ministry. He followed through when he entered the University of Wittenberg a few years later, interrupting his theological studies at one point for two years while he took up medicine, before then completing his master's degree in theology at Jena in 1603. But he again fell so sick that he thought he would die. As part of his last testament, he wrote a detailed confession of his beliefs.

After some educational travel abroad, Gerhard returned to Jena where he busied himself with lecturing, writing, and gaining his doctoral degree in 1606. Immediately there were many who called him to teach (over his career virtually every university in Germany issued a call to him), but he settled in Jena and taught there until his death in 1637.

Even when he was in his twenties, Gerhard's abilities were so respected that he was made superintendent, first locally and then over the entire duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. This required him to be active in the administration of the churches in the region and also in certain diplomatic affairs with the duke. These were times of deep turmoil in Germany. Because Calvinism was not yet a legally-recognized religion in the Empire, those following this path called themselves "reformed" Lutherans and, hiding under this deceptive name, did much damage to true Lutheranism. The Church of Rome was also striving to win back territory lost to the

Sacred Meditations is available from Magdeburg Press, 8765 Ederer Road, Saginaw MI, 48609, or online at www.Magdeburgpress.com. It may also be obtained by special order from the CLC Book House.

As we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we take a brief look at the lives of some of the most influential and important Lutheran theologians.

Reformation. Cardinal Bellarmine was their leader in this "Counter Reformation." Gerhard spent much effort in writing against the attacks upon the truth issuing from both these fronts. Nor did this struggle involve only the pen. The horribly destructive Thirty Years' War began in 1618, only two years after Gerhard became a full professor at Jena, and raged around Jena until long after his death. His own estate was burned, and he was once taken captive by one of the rampaging armies.

Gerhard gained his greatest fame as the premier dogmatician of his age, ranking third behind only Luther and Chemnitz, and far ahead of all others. His name is connected to his monumental *Loci Theologici*, or *Theological Topics*, his life-long work consisting of 4000 small-print pages of Latin covering every topic in detail. Such a large and difficult work has invited many to see him as a dry-as-dust intellectual, interested only in hair-splitting correctness. But how wrong they are! Even in these heavy tomes, his vital spirituality and pastoral concerns are plainly seen. He would even insert prayers and hymns into his discussion. This monumental work is currently being translated into English.

Less well known are his many purely devotional works. The young man who had sought comfort in the face of death was now seeking to be a comfort for others in their fears. He wrote his *Manual of Comfort* in 1611, the year in which he lost his wife, infant child, and health. In it, each devotion begins with "The afflicted person says . . ." and concludes with "The comforter says . . ." He was writing for himself and all like him.

His most popular devotion book, *Sacred Meditations*, has fortunately been recently retranslated into more modern English. It is the best and easiest way for us to become acquainted with this Lutheran giant. The fifty-one devotions are a bit longer than we may be used to, and much meatier, too. But in them we will encounter a fellow pilgrim who is both highly learned and deeply



pious, and willing to guide us on our way.

Norman Greve is pastor of St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church in Iron River, Michigan.

In this series, those involved with CLC foreign missions profile one area of our overseas endeavors.

Milimani, Kenya

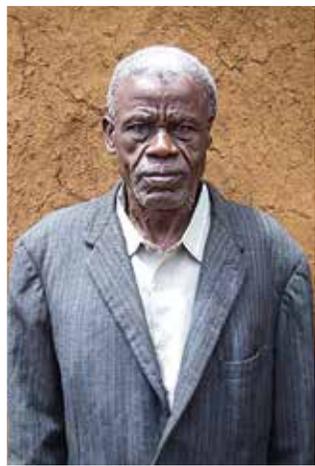
“Where is grandfather?” was the question I posed to one of his many grandchildren early on a Sunday morning. I wasn’t sure which one of the grandchildren I was asking, as there was a host of names which I couldn’t quite keep straight, but they all shared an unmistakable likeness to their family patriarch. Asking the question, I didn’t bother with the possessive pronoun “your” because the old man, as he’s called, had already stated that I had been adopted as one of his own.

“Anakuja.” *He is coming.*

In rural Kenya that can mean he’s intending to come but hasn’t left the house yet, he has left the house and is awaiting a motorbike taxi, he’s halfway down the road and has stopped to chat with a neighbor, or he truly is in motion and perhaps is right around the bend.

Nearly an hour later, we saw the familiar sight of his hat peeking over the crest of the hill on which Holy Cross Emmaus Lutheran Church is located. It’s a nearly half-hour walk from his hometown of Jaribu Kagoto to the church in Milimani, but he accomplishes it with relative ease in spite of being very chronologically gifted. Samson Otieno serves as the head pastor of this relatively young church.

Formerly a truck driver, he was forced to transition into subsistence farming after struggling with severe shoulder pain. It was



Samson Otieno

Otieno who led the early prayer meetings when there was no church building, no school, nor any firm plans to build one. He helped to inspire the community to invest in a school for their children and to begin a church that was different from the others. He has been an example of humility in leadership that is a rare find in the Kenyan churches. Otieno also has a gift of explaining Biblical teaching using illustrations that are easily accessible to his friends and neighbors living the same kind of rural village life.

He has been a Christian nearly his entire life and has moved from one church to another as either his work or the leadership of any given church dictated. Otieno recounted that he had always before enjoyed the fruit of Christianity, but it wasn’t until he had the opportunity to undertake a thorough study of the Bible as taught in Luther’s Small Catechism that he came to know not only the fruit, but also the tree and the roots as well. He knew well the message of Christ crucified for sinners, but had never before had the privilege of a systematic study of the Scriptures, exploring the full counsel of God. For this, he has been very grateful.

Our faithful God raised up this servant in the right place and at the proper time to shepherd this fledgling congregation assembled in Milimani. They initially came for a variety of reasons and from various backgrounds—including Catholic, Jehovah’s Witness, African Inland Church, and even Islam. Some have gone, but many have stayed and have been blessed by Otieno’s faithful adherence to the Word of God.

It is a privilege to work alongside of someone like Samson Otieno. Give thanks to God for him and pray





Students and faculty of Emmaus Hill School in Moi's Bridge, Milimani, Kenya.



Samson Otieno family

for him, that he may continue to be able to serve as faithfully as he has been serving in spite of many physical challenges. Pray too that there may be one to follow after him who will take up his mantle and continue to walk in a manner worthy of this calling.



Michael Gurath is pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Phoenix, Arizona, and part-time CLC missionary to Kenya and Uganda.

BREATH *continued from page 4*

given to them by the Holy Spirit. God inspired—literally *breathed into*—the men His Holy Word.

Even though it was the work of the Holy Spirit which inspired the writers, we also believe the men were not mere automatons, placing words on paper in a robotic fashion. This is why it should not bother us that the books written by different writers are often in a recognizable writing style. God, in His wisdom, was able to convey the thoughts and words He wished while making use of the individual writer's particular talent, educational level, colloquialisms and personal writing form.

We also see that the writers *knew* they were being inspired. Paul mentions this in the passage just noted, as well as in other texts. Paul also clearly distinguishes between the inspired Word of God he was presenting and

his own personal opinions. David confessed that it was the Spirit of the Lord speaking through him in 2 Samuel 23:2. Other writers of the Scriptures were also clear in teaching the people that the words they were presenting were from the Lord.

What a blessing it is that our Lord has placed in our hands, in written form, the very thoughts of His heart, the plan of our salvation, and the hope of our future! It is as relevant today as it ever was, or will ever be. As Jesus Himself declares, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away*" (Mark 13:31).



David W. Bernthal is the principal of Luther Memorial School in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Messiah Lutheran Church—Hales Corners, Wisconsin

Messiah Lutheran Church, in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, is one of the charter congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). The first meeting of the group that would later go on to found Messiah Lutheran was in the home of Ruth Schaller, a parochial school teacher in Milwaukee. The church was formally established as Messiah Lutheran Church in 1960, and at that time it called Pastor Paul Koch as its first shepherd.

This small group of believers had no permanent facility for the first eight years of its existence. They met in various rented facilities in the greater Milwaukee area. When Pastor Koch accepted a call to teach at Immanuel Lutheran College, the church called Pastor David Lau as the second shepherd of the flock, even though they still had no permanent location. Although the members experienced a number of setbacks in their search for a permanent home during this period, the Lord eventually led them to the purchase of a three-acre tract in the village of Hales Corners (about fourteen miles from Milwaukee). This site is the present location of the church and school. When Pastor Lau accepted a call to serve the Bowdle, SD congregation, Pastor Bertram Naumann was called to become the third shepherd of Messiah Lutheran, and the first one at the Hales Corners location.

Having acquired a permanent location, the congregation immediately began a building program. Using a great deal of volunteer help, they built a parsonage and a church building with an educational wing. The inclusion of an educational wing in the initial church building reflected



Several of the pastors who have served Messiah Lutheran Church (Left to Right): Prof. John Ude, Prof. David Lau, Pastor Michael Eichstadt (current) and Prof. John Pfeiffer.

the vision of the congregation: from the beginning, they realized the importance of Christian education, and they maintained a goal of eventually establishing a Christian Day School. In fact, the encouragement of an effort to establish such a school was included in the calls of all their pastors. In the meantime, Pastor John Pfeiffer (the fourth shepherd of the flock) began Saturday School classes for the purpose of improving the religious training of the congregation's youth. This was yet another reflection of the congregation's recognition of the importance of Christian education.

Finally, in 1993, the long-standing goal of having a Christian Day School was realized when teacher Ted Quade was called to be the principal and teacher of Messiah Lutheran School. The anticipated school





enrollment for the first year was only about a dozen students. By the year's end, however, the actual enrollment reached twenty-six—more than double what had been expected. The blessing of this increase in enrollment also brought some challenges, but the Lord provided solutions. The challenge of an increased workload for Mr. Quade was met through volunteer help, and the challenge of limited space was met by removing church pews during the week to make room for classes, and then replacing the pews before the Sunday service.

Over the years, both the membership numbers and the physical plant of Messiah Lutheran Church and School have grown as a result of the Lord's blessings. In 1994, the original educational wing was remodeled, and two new classrooms were included. A second teacher was called in 1996. Four years later, the position of kindergarten teacher was added. Another classroom, an activities room, and a kitchen were built in 2006. In 2013, the kindergarten program was expanded to include both K4 (kindergarten for four-year-olds) and K5 programs.

Messiah Lutheran's commitment to Christian education has resulted in a close relationship between Messiah Lutheran Church and Immanuel Lutheran High School and College in Eau Claire, and this close connection has been the source of mutual blessings to the two institutions as well as blessings to the CLC at large. At any given time, the number of former Messiah students attending Immanuel is in the teens. Several former Messiah students have gone on after their attendance at Immanuel to become CLC pastors or teachers. Also, four Messiah pastors and one Messiah member have been called to be professors at ILC. Over a dozen vicars and student teachers from Immanuel have been blessings to

Messiah. Truly, the Lord has showered His blessings upon all of us through these educational programs.

Throughout its 54-year history, Messiah Lutheran has remained true to the Lord's Word, even as both challenges and blessings have come to this group of believers. Trust in and love of the Lord leads the congregation in its active evangelism efforts of sharing the Gospel locally, including the live streaming of weekly church services. The congregation continues to provide Christian education for the young with Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and youth activities; as well as through its support of the synodical Traveling Vacation Bible School program. We are mindful that the people involved in these programs are the future of the church. We see the Lord's blessings on these efforts in many ways, including the blessings of former Messiah Lutheran School students who later remain in the area and bring up their children with Messiah as their church home.

Several of the charter members still worship every Sunday at Messiah, while others have gone on to be with the Lord. Messiah's 220 souls across southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois pray daily that they faithfully continue to preach, teach, and practice the true doctrine of the Word, while seeking to share His grace with all until He returns. To the Lord be all the praise, glory, and honor—He is Messiah!



Ted Quade is principal of Messiah Lutheran School in Hales Corners, Wisconsin.

March 2015

TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941; WS = Worship Supplement 2000; SC = Martin Luther’s Small Catechism;

[] = Minor Festivals or commemorations in the Christian Church Year

Date	Reading	Verse
Mar 2	Romans 5:1-11	WS 723
	We can rejoice even in our sufferings because God’s love for us has been made obvious in Christ Jesus.	
Mar 3	Mark 8:27-38	WS 722
	Jesus the Christ was specifically chosen to suffer many things, be killed, and rise again in three days.	
Mar 4	John 12:20-28	TLH 518:1-4
	Many would believe in Him, and His Father would thereby be glorified.	
Mar 5	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	TLH 354
	So much of the world makes fun of the cross that it’s comforting to know it’s not really foolishness after all.	
Mar 6	Genesis 17:1-7	PS 105
	At age ninety-nine, Abram gets a new name to remind him that God’s promises never fail.	
Mar 7	John 15:18-25	PS 35
	Don’t be discouraged when the unbelieving ridicule your faith. Their ridicule only proves you are not one of them.	
Mar 9	Exodus 20:1-17	TLH 154
	God expects us to keep these commandments. Jesus hung on a cross because we do not keep them.	
Mar 10	Galatians 2:17-21	TLH 289
	We have been crucified with Christ, so we live by faith in Him and not by obedience to the Law.	
Mar 11	John 2:13-22	WS 721
	What gives Jesus His authority? His resurrection from the dead as the Son of God with power!	
Mar 12	Mark 10:35-45	TLH 146
	It is better to serve than to be served. No less than the Son of Man Himself demonstrated this.	
Mar 13	Psalms 22:23-31	TLH 522
	Praise God who raised Jesus after His suffering was completed—and who hears our cries for help, too!	
Mar 14	Psalms 19	SC Lord’s Prayer
	Every word of God is perfect, trustworthy, and glorious. Forgive my sin, O God, and let me follow Your voice.	
Mar 16	Ephesians 2:1-10	TLH 157
	You were dead in your transgressions and sins, but by grace you are now alive.	

Date	Reading	Verse
Mar 17	Numbers 21:4-9	PS 25
	God’s mercy finds a way for sinful Israelites to live, and a pole with a snake foreshadows Christ’s crucifixion.	
Mar 18	John 3:14-21	TLH 245
	God so loved the world that He found a way to save it. Whoever trusts in Jesus shall not perish.	
Mar 19	Deuteronomy 7:6-11	TLH 152
	It was not because of <i>your</i> great goodness that God chose you, but because of <i>His</i> . So honor <i>Him</i> with a godly life.	
Mar 20	Revelation 5:8-14	WS 757
	Worthy is the Lamb who was slain for our transgressions; let every creature under heaven give Him glory!	
Mar 21	1 Samuel 16:14-23	PS 150
	[Birth of Johann Sebastian Bach] “The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul” (J. S. Bach).	
Mar 23	Hebrews 5:1-10	TLH 220
	Jesus is truly our high priest, for He was called to the office just as others (like Aaron and Melchizedek) were.	
Mar 24	John 11:46-57	TLH 143:1-5
	Caiaphas was right without realizing it. It is better for one to die than for all to die—when the One is Jesus.	
Mar 25	Luke 1:26-28	TLH 84:5
	[The Annunciation of Our Lord] Nine months until Christmas, and with Holy Week in sight we pause to trace the Christ from manger to cross.	
Mar 26	Jeremiah 31:31-34	PS 32
	The people can’t break the New Covenant because in it God’s promises don’t depend on the people at all.	
Mar 27	Matthew 23:34-39	PS 119:9-16
	The disastrous result of turning away from Christ is revealed, but so is His deep desire for our salvation.	
Mar 28	Philippians 2:5-11	TLH 162
	Jesus humbled Himself to the point of death, even death on a cross. Might you adopt a humble attitude, too?	
Mar 30	Mark 15:1-47	TLH 140
	“Ah! I also and my sin wrought Thy deep affliction; This indeed the cause hath been of Thy crucifixion” (TLH 140:3).	
Mar 31	Genesis 50:15-26	TLH 378
	[Commemoration of Joseph] Can God turn man’s wickedness to serve His purposes? He can and does. Consider Joseph. Consider Jesus’ Passion, too.	

Friends Who Need Jesus



Identify people from among your friends, relatives, coworkers and acquaintances who don't yet know Christ as their Savior. Fill their names in on this chart. Pray for these people. Ask God to give you opportunities to share the truths of His Word with them. Don't be afraid to invite them to come to worship with you – 73% of unchurched adults in the U.S. say they don't come to church because *they have never been invited*.

These brief topics were written to help Christians think about the ways in which they share the Gospel with others. Cut this page out if you like and post it on your refrigerator. Decide for yourself whether this is a helpful addition to your "outreach repertoire."

FRIENDS WHO NEED JESUS

Friend at School

Friend in a Community Activity

Family in Crisis

Recently Divorced

Coworker

Family / Relative

Newcomer to Area

Family with New Baby

Close Friend

Neighbor

Widow / Widower

Other

SEEN IN PASSING

Items of interest from various sources of religious news and opinion, in print and on the web.

Faithful doesn't Always Mean Big.

A top evangelical church planter pointed out the things that people (often falsely) identify as signs of success in a church: “. . . People showing up (above all else, this is the number one sign to people of your legitimacy, whether that's fair or not), the presence of children, recommendations from a friend, ample funding, quality leaders, nice signs, nice space, and a quality website.” But a congregation that doesn't enjoy these blessings may still be doing exactly what God has called them to do: “It is quite possible that God in his mercy has called you to a place of desperation as he did Jesus and Paul. Their ministry thrived and found its completion and fullness in the Garden of Gethsemane, shipwrecks, beatings, public crucifixion, imprisonment, human contempt, appearances of failure and abandonment by the big crowds. God caused their ministry to bear great fruit in settings of desperation. Is it possible that is your calling also? If it is, are you willing to receive that calling? An old adage says, ‘Everyone wants a revolution, but nobody wants to do the dishes.’” Anonymous, ‘The Dirty Secrets Of Church Planting (Part 1)’. *Leadership Journal*. 9 Dec. 2014. Web. 16 Dec. 2014.

‘Dogs In Heaven? Pope Francis Leaves Pearly Gates Open.’

Pope Francis has previously given hope to gays, unmarried couples and advocates of the Big Bang theory. Now, he has endeared himself to dog lovers, animal rights activists and vegans. During a weekly general audience at the Vatican last month, the pope, speaking of the afterlife, appeared to suggest that animals could go to heaven. Gladstone, Rick. ‘Dogs In Heaven? Pope Francis Leaves Pearly Gates Open’. *Nytimes.com*. New York Times, 11 Dec.2014. Web. 16 Dec. 2014.



What Protestants Pray For.

A survey by LifeWay Research asked American protestants to list the things they most commonly pray for. The leading answer, with 51% of respondents including it on their list,

was “. . . for my own sin.” This was followed by “. . . for my enemies” (46%); “. . . for people in natural disasters” (44%); “. . . for people of other faiths or no faith” (26%); “. . . to win the lottery” (20%); “. . . for God to punish someone who hurt me” (14%); “. . . for my favorite team to win a game” (11%); “. . . to find a good parking spot” (9%), and “. . . not to get caught speeding” (7%). ‘Gleanings’. *Christianity Today* 2014: 16. Print.

Church Growth Methods Don't Work on “Nones”.

In a review of the book *Rise of the Nones*, by James Emery White, Kyle Rohane notes that the percentage of Americans responding “none” when asked their religion has almost tripled over the last 25 years, to about 20%. Megachurches are having trouble attracting the nones, he says, because their “seeker-sensitive” approach (contemporary music, coffee shops, theater seating) isn't working. “This approach may have worked in the 1980s and '90s, but that was because the typical unchurched person was a baby boomer who had been raised in a church and was just starting to have kids. . . . They actually wanted to find a church. Not so with the nones.” Rohane, Kyle. “Nones” are Your Business’. *Leadership Journal* Fall 2014: 70. Print.



Students and faculty of Emmaus Hill School in Moi's Bridge, Kenya.



Interested in taking part in a future Mission Helper trip?

Go to <http://mht.lutheranmissions.org/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In accord with our usage and order, **John Klatt**, who was called by Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Loveland, Colorado, to be its pastor, was installed on December 14, 2014. Preaching for the service was Pastor Thomas Schuetze.

—Pastor Chad M. Seybt

In accord with our usage and order, **Delwyn Maas**, who was called by Gift of God Lutheran Church, Mapleton, North Dakota, to be its pastor, was installed on September 21, 2014. Also participating in the service were Pastors James Naumann, Matthew Gurath, Michael Roehl, John Johannes, Sr., John Johannes, Jr., and Joel Fleischer.

—Pastor John Hein.